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As social media guardrails fade and AI deepfakes go mainstream

By ALI SWENSON and CHRISTINE FERNANDO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly three years after rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol, the false election conspiracy theories that drove the violent attack remain prevalent on social media and cable news: suitcases filled with ballots, late-night ballot dumps, dead people voting.

Experts warn it will likely be worse in the coming presidential election contest. The safeguards that attempted to counter the bogus claims the last time are eroding, while the tools and systems that create and spread them are only getting stronger. Many Americans, egged on by former President Donald Trump, have continued to push the unsupported idea that elections throughout the U.S. can't be trusted. A majority of Republicans (57%) believe Democrat Joe Biden was not legitimately elected president.

Meanwhile, generative artificial intelligence tools have made it far cheaper and easier to spread the kind of misinformation that can mislead voters and potentially influence elections. And social media companies that once invested heavily in correcting the record have shifted their priorities.



Oren Etzioni poses for photos at the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence where he serves as advisor & board member, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Seattle.

Continued on Page 2

Associated Press

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As social media guardrails fade and AI deepfakes go mainstream

Continued from Front

"I expect a tsunami of misinformation," said Oren Etzioni, an artificial intelligence expert and professor emeritus at the University of Washington. "I hope to be proven wrong. But the ingredients are there, and I am completely terrified." **AI DEEPFAKES GO MAINSTREAM**

Manipulated images and videos surrounding elections are nothing new, but 2024 will be the first U.S. presidential election in which sophisticated AI tools that can produce convincing fakes in seconds are just a few clicks away.

The fabricated images, videos and audio clips known as deepfakes have started making their way into experimental presidential campaign ads. More sinister versions could easily spread without labels and fool people days before an election, Etzioni said.

"You could see a political candidate like President Biden being rushed to a hospital," he said. "You could see a candidate saying things that he or she never actually said." Faced with content that is made to look and sound real, "everything that we've been



Minnesota Democratic Secretary of State Steve Simon, left, claps after registering newly eligible voters, June 1, 2023, at Arlington Hills Community Center in St. Paul, Minn.

Associated Press

wired to do through evolution is going to come into play to have us believe in the fabrication rather than the actual reality," said misinformation scholar Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The Federal Election Commission and Republicans and Democrats in Congress are exploring steps to regulate the technology, but they haven't finalized any rules or legislation.

A handful of states have passed laws requiring deep-

fakes to be labeled or banning those that misrepresent candidates. Some social media companies, including YouTube and Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, have introduced AI labeling policies. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to consistently catch violators.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUARDRAILS FADE

It was just over a year ago that Elon Musk bought Twitter and began firing its executives, dismantling some of its core features and reshaping

the social media platform into what's now known as X. Since then, he has upended its verification system, leaving public officials vulnerable to impersonators. He has gutted the teams that once fought misinformation on the platform, leaving the community of users to moderate itself. And he has restored the accounts of conspiracy theorists and extremists who were previously banned.

The changes have been applauded by many conservatives who say Twitter's previous moderation attempts amounted to censorship of their views. But pro-democracy advocates argue the takeover has shifted what once was a flawed but useful resource for news and election information into a largely unregulated echo chamber that amplifies hate speech and misinformation.

In the run-up to 2024, X, Meta and YouTube have together removed 17 policies that protected against hate and misinformation, according to a report from Free Press, a nonprofit that advocates for civil rights in tech and media. In June, YouTube announced that while it would still regulate

content that misleads about current or upcoming elections, it would stop removing content that falsely claims the 2020 election or other previous U.S. elections were marred by "widespread fraud, errors or glitches." The platform said the policy was an attempt to protect the ability to "openly debate political ideas, even those that are controversial or based on disproven assumptions."

X, Meta and YouTube also have laid off thousands of employees and contractors since 2020, some of whom have included content moderators. The shrinking of such teams "sets the stage for things to be worse in 2024 than in 2020," said Kate Starbird, a misinformation expert at the University of Washington.

Meta explains on its website that it has some 40,000 people devoted to safety and security. It also frequently takes down networks of fake social media accounts that aim to sow discord.

Ivy Choi, a YouTube spokesperson, said the platform has recommendation and information panels, which provide users with reliable election news.






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Biden orders strikes on an Iranian-aligned group in Iraq

By **AAMER MADHANI, ZEKE MILLER and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Joe Biden ordered the United States military to carry out retaliatory airstrikes against Iranian-backed militia groups after three U.S. service members were injured in a drone attack in northern Iraq.

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said one of the U.S. troops suffered critical injuries in the attack that occurred earlier Monday. The Iranian-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups, under an umbrella of Iranian-backed militants, claimed credit for the attack that utilized a one-way attack drone. Iraqi officials said that U.S. strikes targeting militia sites early Tuesday killed one militant and wounded 18. They came at a time of heightened fears of a regional spill-over of the Israel-Hamas war. Iran announced Monday that an Israeli strike on the outskirts of the Syrian capital of Damascus killed one of its top generals, Seyed Razi Mousavi, who had been a close companion of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the former head of Iran's elite Quds Force. Soleimani was slain in a U.S. drone strike in Iraq in January 2020.

Iranian officials vowed revenge for the killing of Mousavi, but didn't immediately launch a retaliatory strike. The militia attack

Monday in northern Iraq was launched prior to the strike in Syria that killed Mousavi. Biden, who was spending Christmas at the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, was alerted to the attack by White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan shortly after it occurred Monday and ordered the Pentagon and his top national security aides to prepare response options to the attack on an air base used by American troops in Irbil.

Sullivan consulted with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. Biden's deputy national security adviser, Jon Finan, was with the president at Camp David and convened top aides to review options, according to a U.S. official, who wasn't authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

Within hours, Biden convened his national security team for a call in which Austin and Gen. CQ Brown, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, briefed Biden on the response options. Biden opted to target three locations used by Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups, the official said.

The U.S. strikes were carried out at about 4:45 a.m. Tuesday in Iraq, less than 13 hours after the U.S. personnel were attacked. According to U.S. Central Command, the retaliatory strikes on the three sites "destroyed the targeted facilities and likely killed a number of Kataib

Hezbollah militants."

"The President places no higher priority than the protection of American personnel serving in harm's way," Watson said. "The United States will act at a time and in a manner of our choosing should these attacks continue."

The latest attack on U.S. troops follows months of escalating threats and actions against American forces in the region since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel that sparked the devastating war in Gaza.

The dangerous back-and-forth strikes have escalated since Iranian-backed militant groups under the umbrella group called the Islamic Resistance in Iraq and Syria began striking U.S. facilities Oct. 17, the date that a blast at a hospital in Gaza killed hundreds. Iranian-backed militias have carried out more than 100 attacks on U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria since the start of the Israel-Hamas war more than two months ago.

In November, U.S. fighter jets struck a Kataib Hezbollah operations center and command and control node, following a short-range ballistic missile attack on U.S. forces at Al-Assad Air Base in western Iraq. Iranian-backed militias also carried out a drone attack at the same air base in October, causing minor injuries.

The U.S. has also blamed Iran, which has funded and trained the Hamas group, for attacks by Yemen's Houthi



President Joe Biden answers a reporter's question as he walks from Marine One upon arrival on the South Lawn of the White House, Dec. 20, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

militants against commercial and military vessels through a critical shipping choke point in the Red Sea.

The Biden administration has sought to prevent the Israel-Hamas war from spiraling into a wider regional conflict that either opens up new fronts of Israeli fighting or draws the U.S. in directly. The administration's measured response — where not every attempt on American troops has been met with a counterattack — has drawn criticism from Republicans. The U.S. has thousands of troops in Iraq training Iraqi forces and combating remnants of the Islamic State group, and hundreds in Syria, mostly on the counter-IS mission. They have come under dozens of attacks, though as yet none fatal, since the war began on Oct. 7, with the U.S. attributing responsibility to Iran-backed groups.

"While we do not seek to escalate conflict in the region, we are committed and fully prepared to take further necessary measures to protect our people and our facilities," Austin said in a statement. The clashes put the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in a delicate position. He came to power in 2022 with the backing of a coalition of Iranian-backed parties, some of which are associated with the same militias launching the attacks on U.S. bases.

A group of Iranian-backed militias known as the Popular Mobilization Forces were key in the fight against Islamic State militants after the extremist group overran much of Iraq in 2014. The PMF is officially under the command of the Iraqi army, but in practice the militias operate independently. □

1st Amendment claim struck down in Project Veritas case focused on diary of Biden's daughter

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Criminal prosecutors may soon get to see over 900 documents pertaining to the alleged theft of a diary belonging to President Joe Biden's daughter after a judge rejected the conservative group Project Veritas' First Amendment claim.

Attorney Jeffrey Lichtman said on behalf of the non-profit Monday that attorneys are considering appealing last Thursday's ruling by U.S. District Judge Analisa Torres in Manhattan. In the written decision, the judge said the documents can be given to investigators by Jan. 5.

The documents were produced from raids that were authorized in November 2021.

Electronic devices were also seized from the residences of three members of Project Veritas, including two mobile phones from the home of James O'Keefe, the group's since-fired founder.

Project Veritas, founded in 2010, identifies itself as a news organization. It is best known for conducting hidden camera stings that have embarrassed news outlets, labor organizations and Democratic politicians.



James O'Keefe, president of Project Veritas Action, waits to be introduced during a news conference, Sept. 1, 2015, in Washington.

In written arguments, lawyers for Project Veritas and O'Keefe said the government's investigation "seems undertaken not to vindicate any real interests of justice, but rather to stifle the press from investigating the President's family."

"It is impossible to imagine the government investigating an abandoned diary (or perhaps the other belongings left behind with it), had the diary not been written by someone with the last name 'Biden,'" they added.

The judge rejected the First Amendment arguments, saying in the ruling that they were "inconsistent with Supreme Court precedent." She also noted that Project Veritas could not claim it was protecting the identity of a confidential source from public disclosure after two individuals publicly pleaded guilty in the case. She was referencing the August 2022 guilty pleas of Aimee Harris and Robert Kurlander to conspiracy to commit interstate transpor-

tation of stolen property. Both await sentencing.

The pleas came two years after Harris and Kurlander — two Florida residents who are not employed by Project Veritas — discovered that Ashley Biden, the president's daughter, had stored items including a diary at a friend's Delray Beach, Florida, house.

They said they initially hoped to sell some of the stolen property to then-President Donald Trump's campaign, but a represen-

tative turned them down and told them to take the material to the FBI, prosecutors say.

Eventually, Project Veritas paid the pair \$20,000 apiece to deliver the diary containing "highly personal entries," a digital storage card with private family photos, tax documents, clothes and luggage to New York, prosecutors said. Project Veritas was not charged with any crime. The group has said its activities were newsgathering and were ethical and legal. Two weeks ago, Hannah Giles, chief executive of Project Veritas, quit her job, saying in a social media post she had "stepped into an unsalvageable mess — one wrought with strong evidence of past illegality and post financial improprieties."

She said she'd reported what she found to "appropriate law enforcement agencies."

Lichtman said in an email on behalf of Project Veritas and the people whose residences were raided: "As for the continued investigation, the government isn't seeking any prison time for either defendant who claims to have stolen the Ashley Biden diary, which speaks volumes in our minds." □

Associated Press



This undated photo shows the Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, N.M.

Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico's congressional delegation wants the public to have more time to weigh in on a proposed transmission line that would bring more

electricity to one of the nation's top nuclear weapons laboratories, saying the comment period should be extended by 60 days.

The project comes as Los

New Mexico delegation wants more time for the public and tribes to comment on proposed power line

Alamos National Laboratory looks to power ongoing operations and future missions that include manufacturing key components for the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Native American tribes and environmentalists already have voiced opposition to the multimillion-dollar power line project, which would cross national forest land in an area known as the Caja del Rio and span the Rio Grande at White Rock Canyon. Several pueblos have cultural and spiritual ties to the area.

The congressional delegation said in a letter to the National Nuclear Security Administration that the current 30-day comment period falls on numerous federal and religious holidays and overlaps with multiple Pueblo feasts, making it difficult for any meaningful participation. Members of the delegation also noted that the All Pueblo Council of Governors — which represents 20 pueblos in New Mexico and Texas — is in the midst of a leadership transition and should have an opportunity

to comment and engage directly with the federal officials about the project. A coalition of environmental groups also sent a request for extending the comment period to March 17.

The All Pueblo Council of Governors in 2021 adopted a resolution to support the preservation of the area, arguing that the Caja del Rio has a dense concentration of petroglyphs, ancestral homes, ceremonial kivas, roads, irrigation structures and other cultural resources. □

Sweden moves a step closer to NATO membership after Turkey gives approval



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, left, shakes hands with Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, right, as NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg looks on prior to a meeting ahead of a NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, Monday, July 10, 2023.

Associated Press

By SUZAN FRASER

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) —

The Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee gave its consent to Sweden's bid to join NATO on Tuesday, drawing the previously nonaligned Nordic country closer to membership in the Western military alliance.

Sweden's accession protocol will now need to be approved in the Turkish parliament's general assembly for the last stage of the legislative process in Turkey. No date has been set.

Turkey, a NATO member, has delayed ratification of Sweden's membership for more than a year, accusing the country of being too lenient toward groups that Ankara regards as threats to its security, including Kurdish militants and members of a network that Ankara blames for a failed coup in 2016.

The Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee had begun discussing Sweden's membership in NATO last month. But the meeting was adjourned after legislators from Erdogan's ruling party submitted a motion for a postponement on grounds that some issues needed more clarification and that negotiations with Sweden hadn't "matured" enough.

On Tuesday, the commit-

tee resumed its deliberations and a large majority of legislators in the committee voted in favor of Sweden's application to join. Briefing the committee members before the vote, Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akcapar cited steps Sweden had taken to meet Turkish demands, including lifting restrictions on defense industry sales and amending anti-terrorism laws in ways that "no one could have imagined five or six years ago."

"It is unrealistic to expect that the Swedish authorities will immediately fulfill all of our demands. This is a process, and this process requires long-term and consistent effort," he said, adding that Turkey would continue to monitor Sweden's progress.

Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström welcomed the committee's decision on a message posted on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

"The next step is for parliament to vote on the matter. We look forward to becoming a member of NATO," he tweeted.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg also welcomed the development, saying that he counts on Turkey and Hungary "to now complete their ratifications as soon as possible. Sweden's membership will

make NATO stronger."

Hungary has also stalled Sweden's bid, alleging that Swedish politicians have told "blatant lies" about the condition of Hungary's democracy. Hungary hasn't announced when the country's ratification may occur.

Earlier this month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had openly linked ratification of Sweden's NATO membership to the U.S. Congress' approval of a Turkish request to purchase 40 new F-16 fighter jets and kits to modernize Turkey's existing fleet.

Erdogan also called on Canada and other NATO allies to lift arms embargoes imposed on Turkey.

The White House has backed the Turkish F-16 re-

quest but there is opposition in Congress to military sales to Turkey.

Sweden and Finland abandoned their traditional positions of military nonalignment to seek protection under NATO's security umbrella, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Finland joined the alliance in April, becoming NATO's 31st member, after Turkey's parliament ratified the Nordic country's bid.

NATO requires the unanimous approval of all existing members to expand, and Turkey and Hungary are the only countries that have been holding out.

The delays have frustrated other NATO allies who were swift to accept Sweden and Finland into the alliance. □

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The death toll rises to 18 in a furnace explosion at nickel plant in Indonesia

By MOHAMMAD TAUFAN
Associated Press

PALU, Indonesia (AP) — The death toll following the explosion of a smelting furnace at a Chinese-owned nickel plant on Indonesia's Sulawesi island rose to 18 on Tuesday, as police ordered the plant to stop operations until an investigation is completed.

The blast, which occurred on Sunday, was the latest in a series of fatalities at nickel smelting plants in Indonesia that are part of China's ambitious transnational development program known as the Belt and Road Initiative. Nickel is a key component in global battery production for electric vehicles.

Four Chinese and nine Indonesian workers died instantly on Sunday when the furnace exploded while they were repairing it, Central Sulawesi police chief Agus Nugroho said. Three more victims died a day later while being treated at a local hospital.

Two more workers died on Tuesday while hospitalized, bringing the total number of fatalities to 18, including eight workers from China, said Deddy Kurniawan, a spokesperson for PT Indo-



Police officers and workers stand near the site where a furnace explosion occurred at PT Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel smelting plant in Morowali, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, Sunday, Dec. 24, 2023.

nesia Morowali Industrial Park, known as PT IMIP, the parent company of PT Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel, where the explosion occurred.

The plant is in the Bahodopi neighborhood of Morowali regency.

"We have ordered PT Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel to stop its operation until our entire investiga-

tion is completed," said Nugroho, the police chief, adding that authorities had set up a team to determine whether negligence by the company led to the deaths.

The blast was so powerful that it demolished the furnace and damaged parts of the side walls of the building, Nugroho said.

The head of central Su-

lawesi's manpower and transmigration office, Arnold Firdaus, said that joint investigation team is made up of 18 members, and it includes officials from the central government in Jakarta and a working group from the Chinese Embassy. PT IMIP said in a statement on Sunday that the furnace was under maintenance and not operating at the

time of the explosion. However, "residual slag in the furnace" came into contact "with flammable items," causing the furnace walls to collapse and the remaining steel slag to flow out. Rescuers extinguished the fire and evacuated workers after a nearly four-hour operation, Kurniawan said. About 41 workers were still being treated at a hospital and the company's clinic on Tuesday with serious to minor injuries, including 11 Chinese nationals. Three of them who suffered serious burns will be flown to China for further treatment, Kurniawan said.

In a news briefing on Monday, Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning expressed condolences for the victims and said that China is "saddened by the casualties caused by the accident." She said her ministry is working closely with authorities in Indonesia and has instructed the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta to assist in the aftermath, including ensuring medical treatment is provided to the injured and helping to determine the cause of the explosion. □

Associated Press



Antonio Garcia, of the Colombian guerrilla National Liberation Army (ELN), speaks to the press after signing an agreement with the Colombian government to resume peace talks, in Caracas, Venezuela, on Oct. 4, 2022.

By MANUEL RUEDA
Associated Press

Associated Press
BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)
— The head of Colombia's

Colombia's ELN rebels say they will only stop kidnappings for ransom if government funds cease-fire

largest remaining rebel group said on Monday it would only abide by a recent agreement to suspend the kidnappings of civilians for ransom if the government keeps its promise to finance projects that could provide the rebels with alternate sources of income. In a column published on Christmas Day, National Liberation Army commander

Antonio Garcia argued that Colombian officials and journalists had misinformed the public on Dec. 17, when they announced that the rebels had agreed to stop kidnappings, if a cease-fire with the government is extended next year. Colombians have grown angry at kidnappings by the guerrillas, known by their Spanish initials as the

ELN. Garcia said that while such an agreement was reached during a recent round of peace talks in Mexico City, the government had also agreed in the talks to create a committee that would find ways to finance the peace talks and the current ceasefire and determine what kind of activities will be funded. □

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Over a decade in business, Aruba Living Today: Offering the so much needed human touch



NOORD — We are in 2023. It was a wild ride with Covid-19 and we all are aiming for a change of routine. We simply want to “live” life again. “It is time for living your dream,” as the quote says at Aruba Living Today’s office. “We are fifteen plus years in business, and I am proud to say that all our clients stuck with us. We are no part of a big company, we keep it small, personal, and real. Because you are not a number, no sales target either and certainly your name is not commission. Our responsibility is to make your dream come true,” says owner Randolph Arends.

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As per March 1st 2023, he is working as a commercial partner at Aruba Living Today.

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Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40 % local buyers and 60 % foreign buyers. “Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages.” Besides that, Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers.

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Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Playa Linda Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. This lovely couple was honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

consecutively visiting Aruba) Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors of Aruba Mr. Michael & Mrs. Christine Russo from New Jersey, United States

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Playa Linda Beach Resort bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination, as their homeawayfromhome.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years

Top reasons for returning to Aruba



provided by the honorees were:
Aruba's warm and consistent weather
Aruba's warm and friendly people
Aruba's nice beaches
Aruba's food
"Friends we have made over the years"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are



from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Karen and Donald Feldman who are visiting us from Lynnfield, Massachusetts.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is an AMAZING island that we have been coming to for about 40 years. We love our va-

cation filled with happiness with our family and friends.

Donny and I call it our RELAXING time when we wake up to sunshine, beautiful breezes from the Divi trees and lovely strolls and swims along Eagle Beach. You might say it is our UTOPIA.

Aruba is filled with BEAUTY: beautiful sunsets, beautiful beaches and beautiful happy people. All in all ARUBA is AWESOME and we count the days until we return every year."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!

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Article by Etnia Nativa
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Antlion or Nanzee

Etnia Nativa shares a different story weekly from its cabinet of curiosities (see episode 211). This week it's about the "ant-lion," also known as the Afro-Caribbean 'Nanzee', a mythical insect feared and worshiped by different cultures of the world.

Most residents of Aruba remember their childhood experience playing with the "Yanqueque or Nanzee" mentioned in many children's stories. It is a small insect that lives in a sand pit and is summoned by agitating a thin straw along the edges of the pit or by dropping a live ant into its trap to provoke the "ant-lion" to respond by throwing plumes of sand in its attempt to catch it.

The story of Antlion is so famous that it has a native Aruban charm in Papiamentu, which goes as follows: "Yanqueque yanqueque machi ta pidi funchi cu waranawa. Yanqueque yanqueque sali djei, bo cas ta na candela".

Translated to English

"Yankee Kee mom is asking for cornmeal cake and salt fish". "Yankee Kee, get out of there since your house is on fire".

The name Nanzee came from our sister island, Curaçao, where folklore has taken on a more African flair when they talk about the Antlion, a very famous fable personage that everyone has heard of in the Dutch Antilles and always gets its way.

We must mention that records of antlions have existed since the Middle Age, when there was a literary genre called Bestiary that explains our protago-

nist, the Nanzee or Yankeekee, which is a collection of short descriptions of all sorts of animals, real and imaginary, accompanied by a moralizing allegory. Although a bestiary deals with the natural world, it was never meant to be a scientific text and should not be read as such. However, some observations may be quite accurate, but they are given the same weight as a fabulous account.

A creature called the "Antlion" appears in some bestiaries that derive from a symbolic Greco-Christian book that presents the ancient ant-lion as a moral being that starves to death at birth due to its dual nature (half ant, half lion). While other Bestiaries used the story of gold-seeking ant-lions, other Bestiaries accounts moved away from their sources, geographically and historically, and the Ant-lions were replaced by ants.

In medieval literature, there is a certain story in which, in one way or another, the ant-lion appears as the ferocious "Ethiopian ants" of ancient times that guarded the gold, where numerous ants climb up and down the legs of a horse depositing golden sand in the carrying chair, or another story that tells about the "Ethiopian ants" (ant-dogs) attacking armed gold thieves.

Episode CXXXVII – 238

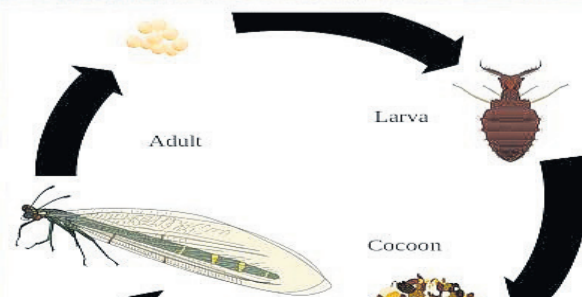
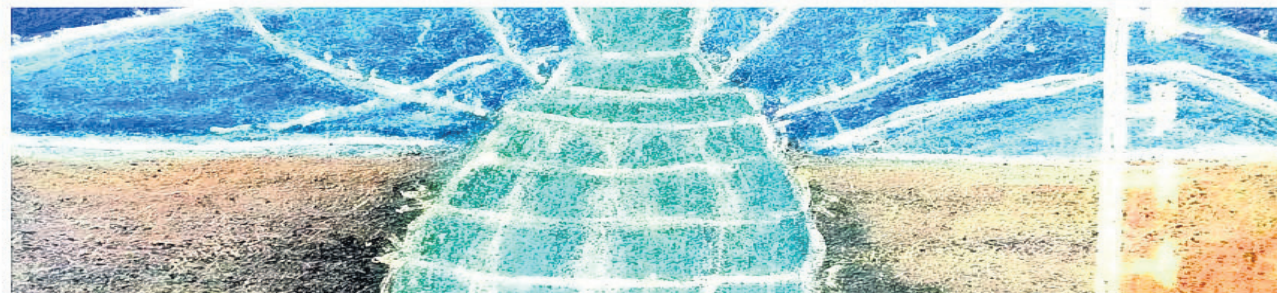
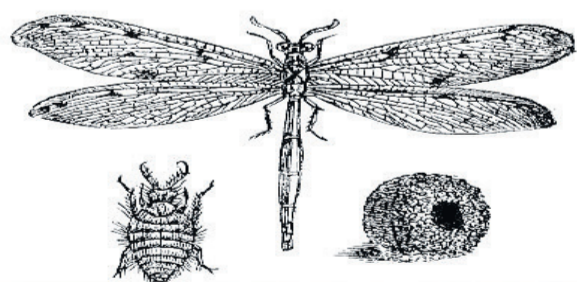
Nanzee (Ant-lion") is incorrectly compared with a spider as a relevant myth throughout the world and how myths, unlike folklore, serve to explain mysterious natural phenomena, the outsmarter or stories related to the origin of the world, the agricultural fertility cycle, or death; the Ant-lion appears on the American continent as the mythical spirit that dies, rather than being reborn and flying away as a powerful spirit.

The Navaho people speak of the fertility myth 'Anlt'áni•, or "ripeners" ("the particular one that causes ripening"), which is the name they gave to certain insects: lacewings and tree crickets, but also occasionally ant-lions. According to Navaho mythology, the "ripeners," incorrectly translated as "corn beetle," plays a role in the ripening of corn, and the vibration these insects emit is said to be indicative of this power.

Additionally, the power of giving voice is attributed to Cornbeetle Girl because she gave voices to the first people created from corn.

However, ant-lion stories are also common in native South American folklore. Like those of the Ashaninka or Campa nation peoples who inhabit the Amazon basin in eastern Peru. Some of their myths attribute demonic qualities to the ant-lions. As the demons of the Campa universe are anything that can cause physical harm to humans, they consider the extremely thin body of an adult ant-lion that looks like a small dragonfly to be a demon.

So if you are interested in connecting and really know all about your travel destination: our flora, fauna, geology, history, autochthonous art, as well as the true identity of the island. You should book a visit to Etnia Nativa, a unique native gem! Let Anthony, our acclaimed cultural columnist, guide and lecture you regarding the most interesting and revealing stories about Aruba's undiscovered native ethnicity, an adventure beyond beaches and tourist traps. Visit his magnificent dwelling that integrates reused materials with nature bursting with culture and island heritage! Whats App +297 592 2702 etni-anativa03@gmail.com



Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to Find the Anchor?

The anchor is a “must see” landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when your visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the “T” junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the Anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos, is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall. On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the “fluke” or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located

in Germany.

Where did the Anchor Come From?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

“According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain.”

Story 2:

“Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them.”

How Did The Anchor Become a Landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbor-master of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis – Owner of Filtec at Zeewijk in San Nicolas), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr. at his famous Charlie's Bar and Restaurant in San Nicolas. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area. The “anchor”, which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated “To All Seamen” on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the Years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam Speziale, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery, graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was re-dedicated “To All Seamen” in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at



The Red Anchor situated at the entrance of former Lago Colony in San Nicolas

sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The Best Time to Visit

When your planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. □

CROSSWORD

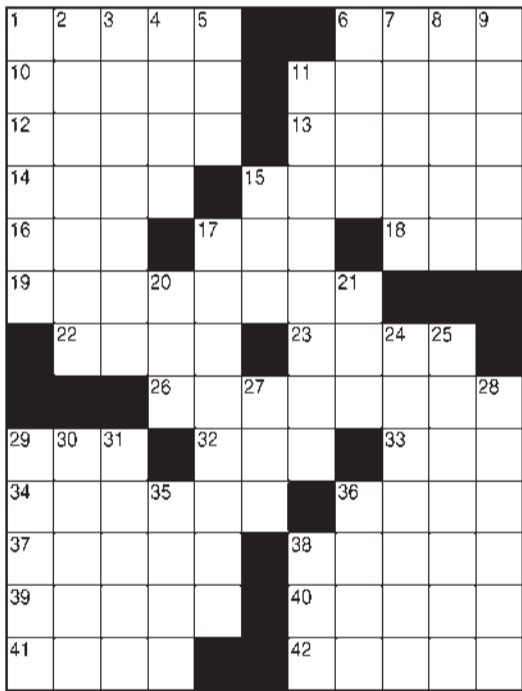
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

- ACROSS**
- 41 Hector's home
 - 1 Mob bosses
 - 6 Pop star
 - 10 Not out
 - 11 Hag
 - 12 Said with a twang
 - 13 Washer cycle
 - 14 Prentious
 - 15 Raw bar item
 - 16 Cardinal color
 - 17 In addition
 - 18 Pig's place
 - 19 Fresh-faced
 - 22 Phobia
 - 23 New Mexico art colony
 - 26 Difficult word
 - 29 — Jacinto
 - 32 Ring win
 - 33 G-man's org.
 - 34 Dream up
 - 36 Tag info
 - 37 Some messages
 - 38 Shows nervousness
 - 39 — Dame
 - 40 Madrid month
- DOWN**
- 1 Yellow bird
 - 2 Not oblivious to
 - 3 Bill stamp
 - 4 Acceptable
 - 5 Salt, to Simone
 - 6 Crocus cousin
 - 7 Forbidden acts
 - 8 Start
 - 9 Suspicious
 - 11 Beckon from afar
 - 15 Punch-in-the-gut sound
 - 17 Engine valve
 - 20 Scot's cap
 - 21 — -di-dah
 - 24 Force member
 - 25 Very cold
 - 27 Luau strings
 - 28 Rests atop
 - 29 Fragrance
 - 30 Knight wear
 - 31 "Swell!"
 - 35 Light
 - 36 Went under
 - 38 Pod bit



Yesterday's answer

- 9 Suspicious
- 11 Beckon from afar
- 15 Punch-in-the-gut sound
- 17 Engine valve
- 20 Scot's cap
- 21 — -di-dah
- 24 Force member
- 25 Very cold
- 27 Luau strings
- 28 Rests atop
- 29 Fragrance
- 30 Knight wear
- 31 "Swell!"
- 35 Light
- 36 Went under
- 38 Pod bit



12-27

AXYDLBAAXR
is **LONGFELLOW**

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-27 CRYPTOQUOTE

P X W ' Z F R H K I H M P Z X V Z H I Z
X B R I H Q H M W . Z G M V Z M E R .
L X D ' I R W X Z V Z H I Z M W Q K I X E
V O I H Z O G ; L X D ' I R V Z H I Z M W Q
K I X E R A U R I M R W O R .
— D W J W X T W

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: KWANZAA IS A SPECIAL TIME TO REMEMBER THE ANCESTORS, THE BRIDGE BUILDERS AND THE LEADERS.
— DOROTHY WINBUSH RILEY

Tis the season for giving: A guide for how to give, even a little



A Utah Food Bank volunteer carries groceries for the needy at a mobile food pantry distribution site Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

By **THALIA BEATY**
Associated Press

Christmas is over, but giving season for nonprofits is just starting to peak. The end of the calendar year is when nonprofits make appeals far and wide to attract donors — in part because of holiday traditions or, for some, tax advantages. Nonprofits get about 30% of their annual donations in December — including 10% in the final three days of the year — according to marketing agency Nonprofits Source.

"This is one of the busiest times of the year for us as we assist donors with their year-end giving," said Erin Musgrave, a spokesperson for the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. Many potential donors don't realize how much nonprofits value even small gifts, especially local organizations that meet community needs. And nonprofits and industry groups warn that donations are down this year, so gifts right now could help them a lot.

Only 11% of Americans itemize their taxes, which allows them to claim significant tax deductions for charitable donations. That means most Americans don't give in December for tax reasons.

"They're thinking about the organization in their community that's having an impact and digging deep and giving," said Chuck Collins, director of the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies.

As you watch commercial appeals and sort through donation requests, here are some things to consider:

WHERE SHOULD I DONATE?

Experienced donors often have a short list of criteria they use to help select nonprofits to support. It could be organizations that serve the area where they live or specific causes or issues with which they have a personal connection.

A question to ask yourself is: "What are the issues or communities that are important to me and where do I want to make a difference?"

A great way to find out about organizations in your area is to ask your friends, coworkers and neighbors. They may have interacted directly with a nonprofit that supports after-school programs, sends companions to elderly residents, advocates around traffic safety or supports local artists. For any topic that is important to you, an organization in your area is likely working on it.

Another potential consideration is check if your employer will match donations to the nonprofit you want to support. If so, your donation could go even further.

If you feel burdened by all the urgent appeals everywhere from the checkout line to the mail or online, one tactic is to make a budget and set aside time to give to organizations important to you. Be realistic, make a plan and then, set aside the guilt. □

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With Trae Young, the numbers are rarely in question

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

The numbers that Atlanta guard Trae Young are putting up are historic: 28.3 points and 11.2 assists per game entering Tuesday. Keep that up for an entire season, and he'll do something that only Oscar Robertson, Tiny Archibald and James Harden have accomplished.

Stats like those typically get a player at least mentioned in an MVP conversation.

With Young, it might not even be a guarantee that he'll be in the All-Star conversation.

The Hawks open their post-Christmas schedule at Chicago on Tuesday night, with Young trying to do something that nobody has ever pulled off in NBA history. He's had at least 30 points and 10 assists in each of his last seven games, tying Robertson's league-record stretch done in the 1964-65 season. Other than Robertson, until now, had ever managed that in more than five consecutive games.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm going to stop you right there," Young said after he tied Robertson's mark. "Let's go to another question. I don't



Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young gestures in reaction to his 3-point shot against the Houston Rockets during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023, in Houston.

Associated Press

want to talk about my stats. Let's talk about something else. Thank you, though. Appreciate you." Maybe that's a sign of maturity from Young, who has a confident swagger that can be perceived as arrogance. To his credit, he's 6-foot-1 and might be the lightest guy in the league; the Hawks list him at 180 pounds, which seems generous. He doesn't often let being the smallest player on the floor impede him in any way when it comes to putting up numbers.

But sometimes, his numbers get looked at as empty calories. Young's stretch of

30-point, 10-assist games seemed barely noticed, what with the league going into its Christmas schedule and with Detroit on a 26-game slide that tied the worst single-season run in NBA history going into its matchup Tuesday against Brooklyn.

And it should be noted, the banged-up Hawks went 3-4 in those seven games with Young on this 30-10 tear. Great numbers, not great results.

"You can't evaluate a player's performance necessarily based on their stat line," Hawks coach Quin Snyder said. "That's partic-

ularly true when you have a playmaker or a leader on the court."

Young averaged 26.7 points and 10.3 assists before the All-Star break last season — and didn't make the All-Star Game. In the formula used to determine the starters, Young finished fifth among Eastern Conference guards in the fan voting, sixth in the media voting and, maybe most damning, 12th in voting among fellow players. There were 375 players who returned All-Star ballots last season (player voting counts as 25% of the formula) and 13 (3.5%) of them listed Young as someone who should start.

Those who got more votes among players in the East guard category last season: Kyrie Irving, Donovan Mitchell, Jaylen Brown, DeMar DeRozan, James Harden, Tyrese Haliburton, Darius Garland, Jalen Brunson, LaMelo Ball, Jrue Holiday and Zach LaVine. Coaches picked the reserves and he fell short there as well.

"Let me say this: we have a tendency to put Trae under a microscope and that's a credit to who he is as a player," Snyder said. "And that's a good challenge for

him. ... Players want to improve and they want to be coached."

Snyder points out some of the things that he believes Young doesn't get enough credit for, like taking charges — no small feat since basically everyone in the NBA is bigger than he is. Young has helped the Hawks make the playoffs in each of the last three years as well, though at 12-17 entering Tuesday, Atlanta has some work to do if it will extend that streak next spring. In fairness, there are things that go unnoticed. There are also things that are noticed.

People in Miami still haven't forgotten how Young told the fans there that "it's over" when the Hawks went up 117-111 with 59.9 seconds left of a game in 2019. It, indeed, was over: The Heat scored the next 22 points and won by 14 in overtime. Fans in New York won't forget how Young took a theatrical bow there when the Hawks were beating the Knicks in the 2021 playoffs, either. He played up to his new-found supervillain status by appearing in a WWE event at Madison Square Garden later that summer. □

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Christmas was rough on Super Bowl contenders except for the Ravens

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

The Chiefs lost again. The Eagles struggled against the lowly Giants. The 49ers were embarrassed at home.

Christmas Day was rough on Super Bowl contenders except for the Ravens.

Lamar Jackson boosted his MVP chances and Baltimore made a major statement with a convincing 33-19 victory over San Francisco in a prime-time matchup Monday night that featured the NFL's two No. 1 seeds.

The Ravens (12-3) would earn a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs with a win at home against Miami (11-4) on Sunday.

"I'm honored to be in the conversation," Jackson said about improving his bid for his second NFL MVP award. "We just have to keep winning to get to February. That's all."

The goal for Jackson isn't an individual award. He wants a Super Bowl ring. The Ravens have won five in a row and can't let up with the Dolphins coming up next.

The 49ers (11-4) were the NFL's hottest team until they ran into Roquan Smith and Baltimore's tenacious defense. Brock Purdy, who became an MVP favorite with a sensational stretch during a six-game winning streak, threw four interceptions and finished the night watching from the sideline after getting banged up.

Despite the loss, San Francisco is still in control of the NFC's No. 1 seed. The 49ers would clinch the top spot with wins over the Commanders and Rams to close out the regular season.

But the rest of the NFC should have hope after watching the Ravens take down San Francisco. The 49ers, who dominated Philadelphia and Dallas in head-to-head matchups, looked vulnerable against Baltimore.

"I don't think they're demoralized," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said about his team. "We weren't bal-

anced, had too many turnovers." The holiday tripleheader began with a stunner when the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs gave one away, losing 20-14 to Las Vegas. The Raiders scored a pair of touchdowns on consecutive turnovers by Patrick Mahomes and won a game without completing a pass after the first quarter. The Chiefs (9-6) have now lost five of eight and likely will have to play their first road playoff game with Mahomes if they even survive the wild-card round.

An offense that has sputtered throughout the season couldn't do much against the Raiders and was unable to overcome the costly mistakes.

"I thought defense played a good game, just two mis-

takes that gave them two touchdowns there when you're backed up in their red zone, so you just can't do that," Mahomes said. "Especially when defense is playing like they're playing, but I just have to be better in that sense and not make those mistakes and try to find a way to play the game and the best way to win it."

Kansas City still has a two-game lead over the Raiders and Broncos in the AFC West but hasn't clinched the division title yet. The Chiefs need one win over the Bengals or Chargers to wrap it up. But their road back to the Super Bowl will look different. Mahomes likely is going to have to play the first road playoff game of his career if the Chiefs advance beyond



Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson (8) runs against the San Francisco 49ers during the first half of an NFL football game in Santa Clara, Calif., Monday, Dec. 25, 2023.

Associated Press

the wild-card round.

After the Chiefs were upset, it appeared there would be a rout in Philadelphia. The Eagles jumped to a 20-3 halftime lead over the Giants that sent Tommy DeVito to the bench.

But a pair of turnovers, including a pick-6 by Adoree Jackson off Jalen Hurts, got New York closer and Tyrod Taylor threw a 69-yard TD pass to Darius Slayton that cut it to 30-25 with 5:22 left. □



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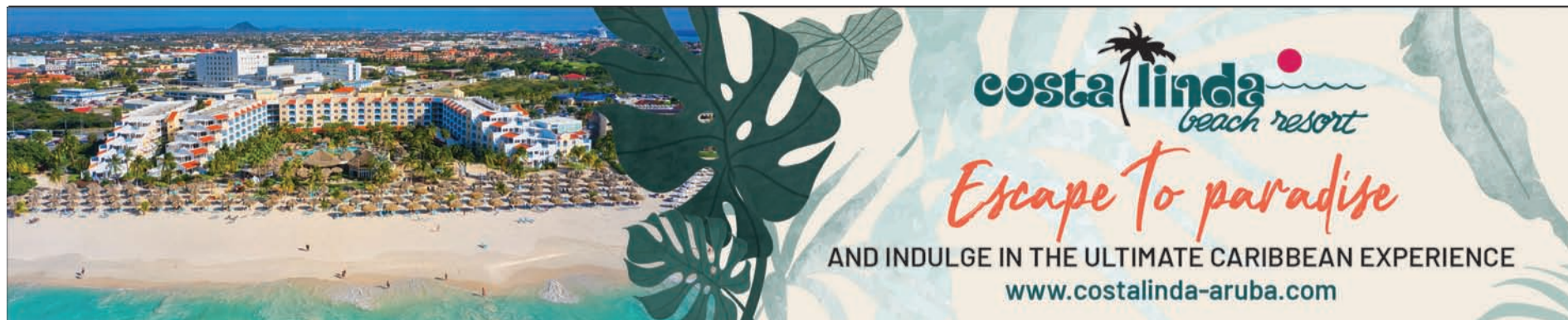
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Culinary Voyage

Start your gastronomic journey with a scrumptious appetizer such as the Maryland Crab Cakes, maybe the Crispy



Calamari or the mouthwatering creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with choco-



late sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

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If you are planning a birthday dinner, here you will receive a nice bottle of champagne to take home with you to extend your experience even further whether on the beach or your own private balcony.

Live entertainment

Just about every day of the week, there is a different live entertainment by the best local artists for you to enjoy. Whether you're in a romantic mood, or more in a swinging mood, there is absolutely a night especially for you where you can combine great music with delicious cocktails mixed with concoctions. In addition, Water's Edge offers three daily Happy Hours from 12pm-1pm, 4pm-6pm and again from 9pm-10pm with all premium brands specially priced.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Whether you join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Water's Edge Restaurant & Bar offers a relaxed and inspirational dining experience overlooking the beautiful Eagle Beach with spectacular ocean views. Gather with friends and family for drinks and appetizers or a night of pampering and relaxation.

Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all throughout the year, and hopefully will continue to do so in the years to come. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☑



"Water's Edge Restaurant is where magnificent beach views, amazing food and excellent service come together."

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